(b) if so, the number of tourists visited South-East Asian countries during the last two years;

(c) the revenue earned by Government from such visits;

(d) whether it is also a fact that the South-East Asian nations are working on packages to woo shopping-crazy Indians to their respective countries; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM (SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY): (a) Of the total Indian travelling abroad, about 17% travelled to South-East Asian countries during 2004 indicating their preference for such destinations.

(b) About 7.2 and 10.4 lakh Indians travelled to South-East Asian countries during 2003 and 2004 respectively.

(c) Revenue earned by South-East Asian countries from Indians visiting these countries is not available.

(d) and (e) A number of airlines and travel agencies have tied up with hoteliers and other stakeholders in South-East Asian coutnries, and offering cheap packages which include economy class return airfare, hotel accommodation for 2-3 days, Airport Hotel transfers, Daily Breakfast and Sight Seeing etc. Coupled with this, all major travel companies/hour operators have tie-ups with the Banks for travel loans, thus enabling people to travel now and pay later in easy instalments, which has resulted in a spurt in Indians travelling to cheaper South-East Asian destinations.

Promotion of tourism industry

†710. SHRI P.K. MAHESHWARI: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) what meaningful steps have been taken to promote the tourism industry;

(b) whether her Ministry has announced group tour packages to attract foreign tourists;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(c) whether Madhya Pradesh will also be included in it; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM (SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY): (a) The promotion of Indian tourism is an ongoing process, which involves development of tourist facilities of high world class quality. The Ministry of Tourism has already undertaken a branding exercise to communicate one clear image of India across the globe through its print, electronic and outdoor media.

(b) to (d) The various promotional efforts of the Ministry of Tourism motivate the tourists to visit the various tourist destinations, including those of Madhya Pradesh, through travel packages offered by the Tourism Industry.

Tourism potential

711. SHRI N.R. GOVINDARAJAR: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether only a few States have been able to tap the immense tourism potential in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government have any new schemes to attract doemestic/ foreign tourists;

(d) if so, the details thereof; State-wise; and

(e) the steps taken by Government to raise the standard of tourism to world class?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM (SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY): (a) and (b) With India's vast bounties of nature; its great treasures of art, architecture and philosophical thought; its rich cultural heritage; its rural countryside and wildlife, and practices of Yoga, Siddha, etc. spread mong different States, there is immense tourism potential to tap in almost all the States. State-wise details od domestic and foreign tourist visits for the years 2002, 2003 and 2004 are given in the enclosed Statement (*See* below).